

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 703

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION recognizing Mt. Juliet Church of Christ on the occasion of its 125th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans, and their dedicated service to God and humanity is the bedrock upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Mt. Juliet Church of Christ, whose members will celebrate the church's 125th anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ had its beginning in 1891 on the very same piece of property the church calls home today; although there have been many changes in neighbors, roads, modes of transportation, and even the designs of the church's buildings, the desire of the members of Mt. Juliet Church of Christ to be a congregation of God's people has remained steadfast; and

WHEREAS, according to Annie Grigg, the church was built as a result of an agreement between her father, J.W. Grigg, and Mrs. Annie Gleaves; Sister Annie donated the land for the church, and Brother Grigg raised the money to build the church on a half-acre plot, where the present building is located; and

WHEREAS, the original deed stated, "This property is to be used only for a house of worship for a congregation of the church of Christ. It is a condition of this conveyance, without which it would be made, that . . . the teaching and preaching in said church shall conform, both

in form and doctrine to that literally prescribed in the New Testament scriptures and established by the early disciples."; and

WHEREAS, the first house of worship was a one-room structure, approximately 25 x 45 feet, weather-boarded and painted white, with double doors in the front and a single door in the rear. There were four tall, narrow windows on each side and a flue for a stove in the middle of the building; it was built on stone pillars, as few buildings had solid foundations in that day; and

WHEREAS, according to the records kept by Sister Dovie Cawthon, the following persons were charter members: Mr. J.W. Grigg, Mr. and Mrs. Will Grigg, Mrs. John Finney (Leora Grigg), Mrs. Jesse Gleaves, Mr. and Mrs. H.H. McFarland, Mr. and Mrs. S.H. Hatfield, Mr. Sam Hatfield, Mr. and Mrs. G.V. Goodall, Mrs. Harrison Ozment, Mrs. Henderson Clemmons, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Scobey, Mr. and Mrs. John Burke, Mr. Eugene Burke, Mr. Jerome Burke, Mr. Kirk Burke, Mrs. Tom Tilghman, Mrs. Dayton Martin, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Dabney Cawthon, and Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Cook; and

WHEREAS, on March 22, 1908, the church caught on fire when sparks from a nearby steam engine ignited the wood shingles. Annie Grigg saw the smoke and rushed to the church in an effort to save the silver communion plates and goblets; although she saved the goblets, which are currently displayed in the church's foyer, she almost lost her life in the act; and

WHEREAS, while a new church building was being constructed, the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ congregation worshiped in the old school building. Wary of another possible fire, the members strove to make the new structure as fireproof as possible, using concrete blocks and metal shingles in the construction of the new church, which was also a one-room structure, quite similar in size and features to the original building; and

WHEREAS, in 1910, the balance of the land to the south and west of the original lot was purchased, and the property lines were extended. The elders listed at that time were G.V. Goodall, T.F. Hamilton, and Jim Grigg; and

WHEREAS, in 1915, the property was deeded again with the same restrictions delineated in the original deed; those signing this deed were R.V. Cawthon, G.V. Goodall, and I.K. Hibbett as trustees; and

WHEREAS, the first Sunday School rooms were built in 1927. In 1958, another building program was finished, and a nursery, baptistery, restrooms, and another classroom were added; a building fund was started with the idea of constructing an auditorium for worship services beside the present building and using the present facilities for an education building. The new church building was erected in back of the former building; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, a bulldozer, a monstrous machine unimagined of by Brother Hamilton and his fellow members, was hitched to those concrete block walls, which quickly came down after being a landmark for some sixty years; and

WHEREAS, the first service in the new building was held on Sunday, May 5, 1968; although the church's membership at that time numbered less than 200, on that day, 425 people were in attendance; and

WHEREAS, Larry Engles was the first person to be baptized in the beautiful new edifice. In 1979, the elders decided to build a new annex that would connect with the church's older building. The annex would have three floors and would be used primarily for classroom space; it was built at a cost of approximately \$155,000. The elders serving at that time were Albert England, Paul Hunter, and Ronnie Sneed; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ has truly been blessed with many wonderful and godly men who have faithfully served as elders in the congregation. From 1910 to the present, at least twenty-five men have served in this capacity; additionally, many dedicated and knowledgeable men have served as Gospel-preaching ministers; and

WHEREAS, the little church that numbered only a dozen or so in 1891 now has a Sunday morning attendance of almost 1,100; and

WHEREAS, the preparations for the current facilities were begun in the summer of 1995, when a "Building On Our Faith Campaign" was launched to raise the necessary funds to build a new auditorium, new nursery facilities, new bathrooms, and church office space; while the Building Committee initially projected a cost of \$1.8 million for the new construction, the final cost reached \$2.2 million; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ held its first service in the new auditorium on September 1997, and the first person to be baptized in the new facility was Ron Wilson; and

WHEREAS, due to the generosity of a loving congregation, the note for the church was burned nine years later at the 115th Anniversary Homecoming; and

WHEREAS, since then, the new auditorium has been full, causing the need for two morning services, which are now full, as well as an overflowing Sunday night crowd that is supplemented with a simulcast; and

WHEREAS, with full classrooms on Sundays and Wednesdays, a parking lot at its capacity, and the purchase of two commercial buildings to house classes and the preschool program, plans for future expansion are once again underway; and

WHEREAS, the last decade has been the decade of acquiring property, and the church has purchased a number of surrounding houses and commercial properties in order to expand the campus to more than twenty acres in the heart of Mt. Juliet and allow the church to enlarge its worship space and create additional classrooms; and

WHEREAS, today, the future for the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ looks extremely bright; there is a call for increased evangelism at home, stateside, and on foreign fields, and more benevolence is required through ministering to the needs of the community and the nation; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ has a history of reaching out to the lost, both here and abroad. In 1976, Elder Johnny McCulloch and his wife, Miss Eugenia, were traveling back from Washington, D.C., and they stopped to worship in Staunton, Virginia. Upon returning to Mt. Juliet, the McCullochs reported to their elders that the congregation in Staunton was struggling. That summer, a group from Mt. Juliet Church of Christ made the first of several trips to conduct Vacation Bible School and a gospel meeting; since then, ten percent of the congregation goes on a mission trip each year, and the church supports seventeen missionaries around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ is one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Juliet Church of Christ has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for 125 years; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and commend the congregation of Mt. Juliet Church of Christ on the celebration of the church's 125th anniversary, extending our best wishes for the church's continued success and growth in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.